

Introduction

The monograph begins a publishing series devoted to the challenges of the so-called *comprehensive management*. This approach to management is an attempt to respond to the high volatility of organizations and ever-increasing complexity of their operating environment.

Complexity in the present discourse is considered a ubiquitous concept, used to describe numerous phenomena of a diverse nature. It reflects the difficulties associated with the solution of a problem, the characteristics of a specific phenomenon, or the identification of rights to which such a phenomenon is subject. Problems with understanding complexity are illustrated by the common dilemma relating to the difficulty in answering the question of what constitutes the main barrier to knowing it. Whether it's the man's cognitive limitations, or it is the very nature of complexity, which in essence implies these limitations.

The theory of complexity, which *inter alia* may be attributed to the following distinguishing features, constitutes the theoretical framework for investigations undertaken by all Authors – in this and subsequent publications – of the newly launched publishing series.

First, the complexity theory is used as a uniform name for a set of models in different areas and fields of science. In each field it has its various theoretical and empirical foundations and sources. Their common denominator is thinking in terms of complexity, having several characteristic assumptions, for example, that comprehensive knowledge about parts requires holistic knowledge about the whole, which is usually absurd and even theoretically impossible.

Second, the complexity theory offers new ways of thinking about some of the classic dilemmas of social sciences, introducing a kind of tension between research conducted within general theories and theses based on an interpretative and contextual approach.

Thirdly, the critical contributions of the theory of complexity to cognitive processes include: redefining the concept of the system, rejecting the assumption of the balance of dynamic processes taking place in systems, a fundamental change in the specification of the nature of the relationship between the system and its environment.

Fourthly, the paradigm of complexity – on which the theory is based – rejects a number of key assumptions adopted in traditional neoclassical economics, such

as, *inter alia*, information perfection, declining benefits or the default existence of rational agents working to maximize goals and functions in the organization.

Fifth, the complexity theory is predisposed to adaptation based on the theory of organization and business strategies, because it perfectly reflects the complexity of the business world, in the economic and political as well as social dimensions. Social and economic systems, from small individual enterprises to the global economy, combine innumerable actors interacting in different ways.

In addition, the adaptation of the concept of complexity for research in the organization sciences and management takes place in two fundamental methodological approaches. The first is based on the so-called scientific method (characteristic of the positivist paradigm based on deduction), using restrictive computer simulations and mathematical inquiries. The second approach rejects the above-mentioned rigour, assuming that the understanding of complex systems requires application of non-positivist methods, such as, for example, ethnographic methods and metaphorical analogies, referring to the inductive approach.

The above-outlined thinking in terms of complexity is the common denominator of the texts from this monograph. They concern the issues of organizational competitiveness, which can be treated as a permanent imperative of action, whereas the configuration of parameters of this competitiveness is of a dynamic, time-varying nature. Competitiveness, understood in terms of the kind of results of management processes, is so broad that it expresses the results of managers' activities in a holistic manner, in accordance with the idea of comprehensive management.

In the monograph, the issues of organizational competitiveness were discussed in three dimensions:

- diversified management approaches to shaping competitiveness (Part 1 *Different approaches to the organizational competitiveness building*),
- international perspective of shaping competitive abilities (Part 2 *The organizational competitiveness from the international view*),
- the importance of the human factor in building the competitiveness of an organization (Part 3 *The importance of human factor in the competitiveness of organizations*).

Announcing the continuation of the reflections initiated by this publication, we would like to encourage you to read it thoroughly.

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Editors